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Security Council

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Monday, 22 December 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Jurica	(Croatia)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. De Gucht
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kravchenko
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Fourth special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2008/728 and Add.1)

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08-66423 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Fourth special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2008/728 and Add.1)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letters from the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Thambwe Mwamba (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda) took seats at the Council table.

The President: I should like to welcome the participation in our meeting today of His Excellency Mr. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and His Excellency Mr. Karel de Gucht, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/800, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Belgium, France, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Members of the Council also have before them documents S/2008/728 and Add.1, which contain the fourth special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1856 (2008).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council that wish to make statements after the vote.

Mr. de Gucht (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium is coming to the end of its mandate as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period 2007-2008. I wanted to underscore the importance of this task for my country through my presence here today.

First of all, I would like to welcome the presence of my colleague, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I welcome in particular the adoption of this resolution to renew and clarify the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). MONUC's role in stabilizing the situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is crucial. Therefore, the Mission requires a clear and robust mandate.

The resolution that we have just adopted is a significant step forward in that regard for a number of reasons. First, the new mandate underscores the importance of protecting the civilian population and states that that is an absolute priority for MONUC. The mandate unequivocally provides for MONUC acting independently in this area. It can now also take action if uncontrolled elements of the Armed Forces of the

Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) commit acts of violence against the population. However, since the means of MONUC are limited, it cannot act everywhere all the time. But, wherever it is present, wherever it can be deployed on time, it must act.

Secondly, the new resolution makes it possible for MONUC to act more independently against armed groups. That is important because the FARDC in its present status cannot be the sole foundation for a strategy against armed groups. However, solid coordination of these actions with the authorities and with the Congolese army is still essential.

Thirdly, the mandate as now renewed gives precedence to strengthened action by MONUC in combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources, one of the main causes of the ongoing conflict. MONUC must use its powers to the utmost to carry out inspections, so that it can make a contribution to putting an end to the exploitation and illegal trade of raw materials, such as coltan or cassiterite. Such action taken by MONUC can be seen within a broader framework in which the international community is supporting the Congolese authorities to restore their control over the exploitation of natural resources, including through the mapping exercise recommended by the group of experts of the Security Council Sanctions Committee.

The fourth important point is an urgent appeal to establish and implement a comprehensive plan for security sector reform. This reform began a few years ago but has not yet led to the establishment of truly disciplined and trustworthy police and armed forces. The role of MONUC in this area must be complemented through reinforced and better coordinated efforts by bilateral and multilateral partners and better follow-up by the Congolese authorities of the results of these efforts, including through the setting up of operational command structures.

Finally, the resolution requests the Secretary-General to strengthen the organization of MONUC by laying down clear and robust rules of engagement. These rules of engagement and the concept of operations must be well reflected in the MONUC mandate, and there must be no ambiguity with regard to troop commanders on the ground.

The five points I have just outlined reflect the substance of suggestions I made a month ago when I spoke before the Council (*see S/PV.6024*). Today I am pleased that these points can be found in the resolution we have just adopted. I would like in particular to thank the French delegation for the quality of the text, which they drafted.

The resolution we have just adopted requests the Secretary-General to make recommendations on the progressive transfer of the civilian tasks carried out by MONUC to the United Nations country team and to multilateral and bilateral partners, so that MONUC can concentrate its efforts on the east. Belgium is prepared to contribute to the consideration of the modalities for such a transfer and would be willing to facilitate the setting up an association of such partners.

The additional capacities that MONUC is to benefit from, following the adoption of resolution 1843 (2008), will not be in place for several months. Belgium continues to support the deployment of a transitional European force while awaiting the arrival of reinforcements for MONUC. Belgium is prepared to contribute to such a force. Belgium is willing to contribute substantially to efforts to strengthen MONUC by providing means of transport, information analysts and training programmes.

Allow me to conclude my statement by expressing my appreciation for the remarkable work carried out by MONUC in very difficult conditions. I truly hope that the new mandate will be an adequate basis for guiding the actions of MONUC in the coming months and that MONUC will thus fully contribute and meet the challenges of restoring peace in this strategic area of Africa.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): First all, I would like to welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, who we have just heard and whose commitment to peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be emphasized.

On behalf of my delegation, I would also like to thank all the members of the Security Council for having assisted us in the drafting of this resolution on the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). I think it is vital for us to learn lessons from the events of the past few months and for the Security Council to send clear messages to everyone involved.

First of all, the resolution sends a message to MONUC. After resolution 1843 (2008), which allowed for 3,000 extra personnel upon the request of the Secretariat, this resolution shows once again our unanimous support for MONUC. The correct implementation by MONUC of the tasks assigned to it and its upholding of the interests of all the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should not meet any opposition.

This resolution establishes an order of priority for these missions, with the protection of civilians as the first priority. It also gives MONUC the mandate to support the Goma and Nairobi processes by undertaking all necessary operations against the armed groups that are trying to jeopardize the political process. We wanted MONUC to have at their disposal every means necessary to take action. We asked for a timely update of its concept of operations and of its rules of engagement — which we hope will be robust — and for a strategic work plan to be drafted in line with the concrete implementation, on the ground, of the missions described in the mandate.

The resolution also sends a clear message to the armed groups. It is very clear in condemning violence by all armed groups, whether the Congrès national pour la défense du people (CNDP), the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) or the Coalition of Congolese Patriotic Resistance. It also highlights the pressing need for these parties to return to the commitments they made in Goma and Nairobi, commitments they have undertaken but are not complying with.

That is why we support the efforts made by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Great Lakes region, President Obasanjo. We know that the negotiations he has supervised Nairobi between the CNDP and the Congolese Government are delicate. Therefore we would like to pledge our support in following up on this mission.

This resolution, like the draft resolution on sanctions that we will adopt, I hope, in a few moments, also sends a message to the armed groups that the international community intends to fight the illicit exploitation of natural resources, as we know that it fuels and prolongs conflict.

The resolution also sends a message to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and countries in the region. MONUC is in the Democratic Republic to help the Con Government to provide security in the Kivus, to rebel groups and to train the Congolese army, b to prepare for elections and to promote governance, respect for human rights and democr

I would like to ensure the Minister for F Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the whose presence we welcome, that he will have t support of France on this path. But MONUC, same time, must not be considered as a substitu the Congolese authorities and army in the easter of the country. The Congolese authorities were e through a democratic process. We support them a believe that maintaining order and security throu the country is first and foremost up to them, even international community and MONUC must, of c help them to do so.

The resolution emphasizes the responsibili States in the region as well. They must cooperate the Government of the Democratic Republic o Congo in order to work for a return of lasting and security throughout the country. We are pleased with the strengthening of bilateral dia between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic Congo. We believe that that is one of the keys to and stability in the region.

Finally, the resolution sends a message t people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo people in the Kivus have suffered a great deal al and must know that they can count on MONU protect them. But everyone must also be aware MONUC cannot do everything. MONUC can onl part of larger efforts, which must include an effe sanctions regime and must combat impunity. In regard, we hope in particular that the Internati Criminal Court and the Congolese Government continue to cooperate closely, that those committed these crimes will be brought before appropriate court and, above all, that justice ca carried out in the Democratic Republic of the C by Congolese judges.

This resolution clearly reaffirms the Coun condemnation of the atrocities committed in the few months. War crimes such as those committe Kiwanja, large-scale sexual violence, the recruitm of children by armed groups, mutilations and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people great tragedies and must not occur again.

perpetrators must know that they will be held accountable. To ensure justice will help bring about lasting peace. A few days ago the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court reminded us, with regard to another country, that victims are not afraid of justice. We will shoulder our responsibilities. We owe as much to these victims.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have asked for the floor to provide a brief explanation of the perspective from which we will vote. In general, my country is pleased with the resolution. We would like to highlight three very important points. First of all, it is important that the resolution reaffirmed that the main priority of the Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is to protect the civilian population. In that regard, we would like to underscore the importance of this resolution stating that the Mission must protect the civilians from violence committed by any of the parties engaged in the conflict.

In recent months we have noted with serious concern that violence has been perpetrated against civilians by some renegade elements of the Democratic Republic of the Congo armed forces. This resolution states quite clearly that the duty of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) is to protect civilians, including from the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) elements, if such situations arise.

Secondly, I would like to underscore the duty of Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to take all necessary measures to ensure that members of its armed forces comply with their duty to protect the civilian population and not to threaten it. The Council's appeal, in paragraph 22, has been stated in previous resolutions, but it must be underscored here. The Congolese authorities have an obligation to take into account past behaviour with regard to human rights, when deciding on candidates for official posts in their security forces.

Third, my delegation would like to underscore the aspects of MONUC's mandate related to the arms embargo and the illicit trafficking in natural resources. We hope to continue to receive information on what is being done in that sphere, in particular on the possible additional measures that the Mission could take to strengthen its supervision, inspection and monitoring role under the sanctions regime and the arms embargo.

By way of conclusion, I welcome the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium to the Council, to whom we extend our greetings.

Mr. Sawers (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): May I also join those welcoming Minister De Gucht to the Council today in light of Belgium's contribution to the work on the Democratic Republic of the Congo over recent months and years.

The resolutions we are adopting today reflect the extensive work in the Security Council in recent months to address what is an ongoing humanitarian tragedy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and our efforts to avert the risk of descent into much worse conflict, with all the attendant potential regional implications.

One resolution reviews the arms embargo and specific individual sanctions, and the other extends, for a further 12 months, the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). I welcome the fact that we now have a more focused mandate for MONUC which, for the first time, sets a clear order of priorities for the Mission and for United Nations troops on the ground. It also includes an important clarification of the relationship between MONUC and the Government security forces, which should help address some of the issues MONUC faced in the recent fighting in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

MONUC's first task is the protection of civilians. My delegation remains appalled at the persistent high levels of sexual violence, in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular, perpetrated by the armed groups, including, sadly, some of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Systematic rape seems to be used by groups, like the Forces Démocratiques de la Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), as a weapon to subjugate and divide local communities. We look to MONUC to do more to bring an end to that horrific practice and to do more to protect women as they go about their daily business.

As the text of the resolution states, there is no military solution to the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The only solution to lasting peace in the Great Lakes region is political reconciliation and cooperation. We commend the Secretary-General's appointment of President Obasanjo as his Special Envoy on the Great Lakes region. This

was a decisive move that has already had considerable impact. President Obasanjo, together with President Mkapa, have important roles in bringing the parties back to the twin tracks of the Nairobi and Goma processes, and they have my Government's full backing.

We are encouraged today by the attendance of Their Excellencies Foreign Minister Thambwe of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ambassador Nsengimana of Rwanda. Cooperation between their two countries is one of the keys to forging peace, stability and prosperity in the Kivus and beyond. The Governments of both countries have signalled their commitment to peace through the closer working relationship they have developed over recent weeks. One big stumbling block remains: the shared blight of the presence of the FDLR on Congolese soil.

We commend the recent improvements on cooperation on tackling the FDLR and the renewed commitment of all parties to a common approach to dismantling the FDLR, as set out in the Nairobi agreement. A crucial part of this is that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has to ensure that there is no further collusion or arms transfer from the Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) to the FDLR, as indicated by the recent report of the Group of Experts on the arms embargo against the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the same vein, the Group of Experts has provided evidence that the forces of General Nkunda of the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple received support from Rwanda, with the knowledge of the Government in Kigali. The Government of Rwanda has to bring such support to an end.

The political process of the crisis in North Kivu has to be backed with effective military support, and we commend the efforts of MONUC to reorganize its troops within the Democratic Republic of the Congo in response to renewed fighting in and around Goma. However, it does require more resources, and it is now over a month since the Council authorized an additional 3,000 personnel. There remains a shortage of firm commitments, and the timeline for deployment has slipped from two months to as much as six months. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that we see these extra boots on the ground as soon as possible.

May I close by observing that the search for peacekeeping resources, in particular enablers such as engineers, helicopters and airlifts, is becoming h We seem to be approaching the limits of g peacekeeping capacity. This reflects well on significant successes United Nations missions hav in building peace and stability in, for example, S Leone, Liberia, southern Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire much of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, bu Security Council and the wider internat community need to be more strategic with the li peacekeeping resources we have at our disposal. is a set of issues that we will need to consider in in some depth. We welcome the discussions prop under the French presidency to focus all of our r on that.

Ms. DiCarlo (United States of America): F would like to welcome Foreign Minister De G Foreign Minister Thambwe and Perm Representative Nsengimana to the Council today.

The United States remains deeply conc about the humanitarian situation in eastern Demo Republic of the Congo. We therefore welcom unanimous adoption of the Security Council reso renewing the mandate of the United Nations Miss the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC another year. In implementing this mandate, we be it crucial that MONUC recognizes limitations prioritizes tasks. We urge MONUC to focus its e in particular on the protection of displaced vulnerable civilians and the establishment humanitarian zones, in keeping with the MO disengagement plan.

We urge all parties to deal with the pri causes of instability in the East, including continuing presence of the Forces démocratiques libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the cont provocation of Laurent Nkunda and the Co national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP). welcome the direct personal involvement of Secretary-General in bringing regional leaders tog in Nairobi last month. We give our full support t peace talks led by United Nations Special E Obasanjo. We hope that ongoing direct discu between the representatives of the Cong Government and the CNDP will produce con results. While these discussions are still at an stage, we hope that they, together with the com implementation of the Nairobi Communiqué an Goma Peace Agreement, will pave the way for la stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Co

The United States also supports the adoption of the draft Democratic Republic of the Congo sanctions resolution, which will be before the Council later this morning. Improved enforcement of the measures listed in that draft resolution should be another element in our strategy to foster stability. We appreciate the professional and balanced work of the United Nations Expert Panel on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we urge the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo to respond to the serious sanctions violations that the Panel has recently documented, particularly with respect to financial networks tied to illegal mineral exploitation.

MONUC cannot work in a vacuum. All parties must adhere to the political process and abide by previous agreements, if MONUC is to carry out its work. The international community and all concerned parties must commit to doing what we can to support a lasting peace for the people of the Great Lakes region. We greatly appreciate MONUC's continued efforts to protect civilians in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo under the most difficult of circumstances.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): We wish to welcome the presence here with us today of the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Thambwe Mwamba, and we acknowledge the participation in our work of the Foreign Minister of Belgium, His Excellency Mr. De Gucht, as well as of the Permanent Representative of Rwanda, Ambassador Nsengimana.

By authorizing a temporary increase in the capacities of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), by clarifying its priorities and by strengthening its operational autonomy, the Security Council has shouldered its responsibilities as regards the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the larger Great Lakes region. We are fully aware of the remaining constraints, and we call for rapid deployment of the additional troops envisaged in resolution 1843 (2008), as well as for a swift handover of MONUC's civilian tasks to other international agencies. Nevertheless, we are confident that MONUC is now placed in the best condition to ensure the protection of civilians, to support the creation of viable security institutions and to facilitate the disarmament and reintegration of combatants.

Chances are that the new MONUC will have to deal with a less tense situation, thanks to the positive dynamic catalyzed by regional and international mediation efforts under the leadership of Special Envoy Obasanjo and of the regional mediator, Mr. Mkapa.

The developments of the political process ignited by the Nairobi summit proved once more that political will is the only real ingredient for the stabilization of the eastern Congo and that there is no military solution to this conflict. Only by cutting all forms of solidarity — political, economic and ideological — with the violence of armed groups and by granting justice to the victims of violence, whoever the authors may be, will we pave the way for sustainable peace in the Great Lakes. No peacekeeping force, no matter how robust, will or should be a substitute for political inertia, in Congo or anywhere else.

That being said, the United Nations has a moral and political duty to protect civilians from extreme violence and humanitarian suffering, despite the absence of peace and political stability. In the twenty-first century, the world expects no less than this of the United Nations. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo the Security Council has shown itself able to respond to this expectation, but the positive impact of that response, in terms of the credibility and relevance of the Organization, will not be sustained if the Council does not apply the same conditions for all the victims of warfare and institutional failure in the eastern Congo as in any other critical situation on the verge of unprecedented humanitarian disaster and chaos — for instance, Somalia.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Allow me to welcome the Foreign Ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Belgium to this meeting. We also welcome the Ambassador of Rwanda, who has joined us.

We welcome the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), which will assist MONUC in being proactive in its duties, in particular the protection of civilians in the eastern Democratic Republic. It is important that MONUC succeed, because without it we risk losing all the gains

we have made, not only in the eastern Congo but throughout the country.

It is also important to emphasize that the solution in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is political, and therefore the Goma and Nairobi process remain the only architecture for addressing the challenges before us. We urge the countries of the region to continue to support the peace and national reconciliation process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to speed up the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, signed in Nairobi on 15 December 2006 with a view to creating conditions for lasting peace and stability in the region.

Finally, since this is our last meeting in the Council, we wish to express our thanks for the support and assistance we have received over the past two years from all Council members and the Secretariat. However, we cannot forget that we leave not having succeeded in addressing the long-standing conflicts on the Council's agenda.

We regret that the Council has again failed to come to the assistance of the Somali people, who will remain at the mercy of all the armed groups that have been terrorizing and murdering them over the past 16 years. Besides agreeing on piracy, we in the Council still debated whether assisting the Somali people in their country was in line with our own national interests in that area. In the end, of course, it was the Somali people who were losers.

Also, the people of Palestine, particularly in the Gaza Strip, face an uncertain future. In 60 years this Council has not been able to act in a very firm manner. We hope that that issue that will continue to engage the Council in the coming year.

Finally, we also wish to recall, among the issues that we are leaving, the Western Sahara, where the Council continues to be unable to actively support the self-determination of the Sahraoui people.

So my only hope is that the incoming members of the Council will find it necessary to continue to fight on these issues, whether they be Congo, Somalia, Palestine or Western Sahara, for the sake of the suffering people in those parts of the world and of the credibility of this Council.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First I wish to welcome the Foreign Ministers of Belgium and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the Permanent Representative of Rwand are present at our meeting today.

China voted in favour of the resolutio adopted in order to show our support for the Nations Organization Mission in the Dem Republic of the Congo (MONUC). China ha closely following the developments in the easte of that country. We have noted with pleasure t security situation there has been moving t stability recently. The Government and the armed group have started a dialogue in Nairo the relations between the Democratic Republic Congo and Rwanda have continued to impro welcome those developments. We also appreci good offices and mediation efforts of the Sec General and his Special Envoy, as well as countries and regional organizations concerned.

China has consistently advocated the political means in the search for an int settlement of the problem in the eastern Dem Republic of the Congo. Recently, Ambassad Guijin, Special Representative of the Government for African Affairs, visited Rwan the Democratic Republic to persuade them to peace through negotiations. We feel that the part all willing to seek a negotiated settlemen sincerely call on all parties to continue to u Nairobi and Goma peace processes as the ba engaging in dialogue in good faith in order t lasting peace and stability in the Great Lakes reg

We have consistently supported the w MONUC, and we highly appreciate its r facilitating the stabilization of the situations Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great region. We support the continuing and importa played by MONUC in stabilizing the situation eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We s the African countries and regions as well Obasanjo, as Special Envoy of the Secretary-G in continuing their roles of mediation and good in order to seek an early comprehensive p settlement of the problem in the eastern Dem Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in F*
At the outset, I would like to offer a few wo welcome to the Ministers for Foreign Affa Belgium and the Democratic Republic of the Co

well to welcome the presence among us today of our colleague from Rwanda.

Unfortunately, like the picture that was painted at our last meeting on in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the situation in that country remains pessimistic. Mindful of the risks of further deterioration in the situation, my delegation supported resolution 1843 (2008), aimed at strengthening the capacity of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) to carry out its mission to protect civilian populations. Based on that same concern, my delegation this morning supported the resolution to extend MONUC's mandate, mindful that the provisions and measures contained in that resolution should be able to assist in resolving the problem, in particular in the area of civilian protection.

But through it all, we must bear in mind that the question of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is first of all a political one, which needs to be resolved through political negotiations. It is therefore crucial that the States in the region, in particular the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, intensify, as a matter of priority, their efforts to implement the commitments that they have undertaken under the Nairobi Communiqué. To that end, we urge all actors to resolve the underlying issues that oppose progress, in particular the threat posed by foreign and national armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My delegation hopes that the recommendations that came out of the bilateral, regional and international initiatives that have already been undertaken may be supported and, if possible, upheld in the context of the new resolution that we have just adopted.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Thambwe Mwamba (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): As your presidency is drawing to a close, Sir, I should like to congratulate you on the very significant work that you have accomplished during the month of December. I thank you very much for allowing me to participate in this important meeting of the Security Council on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC).

I would like to take this opportunity to praise your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica, for the skill he showed last month in handling the very complex range of issues that come before the Council. I would like to thank in particular the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who has devoted himself personally to seeking viable ways and means to restore peace to my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He has been doing so since he came to head this universal Organization. I also welcome the presence here today of my counterpart from the Kingdom of Belgium, Mr. Karel de Gucht.

The Security Council has just adopted the resolution that extends the mandate of MONUC and requalifies its missions. The adoption of this resolution comes after that of resolution 1843 (2008) on 20 November 2008, whereby the Council authorized, as recommended by the Secretary-General, a temporary increase in MONUC military and police personnel, as well as their immediate deployment, in order to allow the mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to strengthen its capacity to protect civilian populations in the provinces of North and South Kivu.

Through me, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomes this new resolution. We are especially pleased that MONUC missions, in close cooperation with the Government, are being strengthened and consolidated in the protection of the civilian population through disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for national armed groups; disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, reintegration and repatriation programmes for foreign armed groups; monitoring of the financing of those armed groups; and support for security sector reform and for the territorial integrity and political independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Congolese Government and people therefore expect these new United Nations forces to be deployed rapidly in order to put an end to the unspeakable suffering of the populations of the provinces of North and South Kivu and of the Ituri district in Eastern Province.

At the very moment I address this Council, the situation that prevails in my country, in the heart of Africa, is nothing short of a major and unqualified disaster. In fact, for almost ten years, the two Kivu provinces have seen one of the deadliest conflicts since the Second World War. There have been approximately five million deaths, and more than 1,700,000 women,

children, elderly people and men have been displaced and left to wander. This is more than in Darfur. A new humanitarian catastrophe with massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, in particular violence against women and children, is taking place at this very moment with the complete indifference of the international Powers and cartels who are not, however, unaware of what is at stake in the upheaval unfairly imposed on our country.

Thus we wish for a rapid United Nations deployment. If, however, for technical and logistical reasons, such deployment is delayed, my Government would also welcome the deployment of a transitional force, which would be placed under the Security Council mandate or would act with the Council's support.

Similarly, the recommendation of the Secretary-General to reconfigure MONUC in order to strengthen its effectiveness and to refocus its action on the Kivu provinces is something that we fully support. That is why my Government believes that, in this context, the massive and visible presence of a United Nations military contingent in Goma would reassure populations and persuade them of the merit of United Nations action, seeking to ease their suffering and to re-establish peace, as is the case today in other provinces in the Republic. It is for these reasons that my Government insists that MONUC's military command should be set up in Goma and not in Kinshasa.

Two years ago, the Democratic Republic of the Congo established new legitimate institutions as a result of successful free and democratic elections — the first in more than 40 years of a crisis of legitimacy. Following those elections — which were organized and successfully carried out with the help of the international community — we believed that a lasting peace would be put in place, and we rightly made reconstruction and development our priority, along with efforts to eradicate insecurity in the eastern part of the country and to strengthen the rule of law, democracy and good governance.

Today, unfortunately, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a country that, while in a post-conflict situation, remains in a situation of conflict: a particularly deadly conflict that is destroying all of our country's economic recovery efforts.

At its next meeting, the Security Cou take a decision on the sanctions regime in my In that connection, the final report of the Experts on the Democratic Republic of th (S/2008/773, enclosure), which my Gov accepts, provides eloquent information on the connections in the illegal exploitation of ou resources, which are fuelling the surge of vi the two Kivus. The report clearly shows that underlying reasons why the Democratic Rep the Congo is being torn apart are, first and f economic in nature. Also, it confirms the acc that my delegations has consistently made for the international community had listened to u the Security Council had reached a consen would have enabled it to act in partnership Congolese Government, we would have saved of human lives and prevented the massive displacements that we now regret to see in the

The soil and subsoil of the Kivus are ove with vast natural resources. As members know, our neighbouring countries are members exclusive group of the world's main expo coltan, cassiterite and other equally important of which their own subsoils do not contain ever

The Congrès national pour la défense d (CNDP) is a part of that structure. Thus, it is our borders that one must look for that st underlying nature. Led by individuals who are by massive violations of human rights and whom are indeed sought by the internationa system, this armed group, with its fallaci incoherent claims, operates more like a m group than a pseudo-political movement.

In addition to the report of the Group of incisive testimony on this matter has also co international institutions and non-gove organizations (NGOs). Reports by Global Human Rights Watch and Rights and Accounta Development are eloquent on the subject. The Southern Africa Resource Watch differs f others in that it identifies, names and lists mult corporations and other predatory enterprises t made their fortune on the resources of the De Republic of the Congo and the blood of its pe of those criminals have been clearly identif Council members know who they are. That purely commercial start of the destabilizatio Kivus.

Here, I welcome the commitment of the Belgian Government and the determination of my colleague Karel de Gucht to punish all businesses and individuals who make use of Belgian territory to engage in these illegal activities.

I should also note that the report of the Group of Experts sets out serious grievances against my Government. I affirm that those acts, when proven, have been carried out by unauthorized persons and in no case constitute a deliberate Government policy. Whenever the Government has been informed of such acts, appropriate measures have been taken; that will continue to be the case in the fresh context of cooperation between my Government and MONUC.

Despite the lack of security within and beyond our borders, despite the constant violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, despite the large number of refugees and displaced persons and despite the continuing illegal exploitation of our natural resources, my Government is firmly committed to attaining peace in the subregion through the restoration of normal diplomatic relations with all neighbouring countries and intensification of economic and trade cooperation through reactivating the Economic Community of the Great Lake Countries (CEPGL). In that connection, we have decided, in agreement with our neighbours, to exchange ambassadors during the first quarter of 2009.

Moreover, the reactivation of the CEPGL will provide an opportunity for us to discuss our bilateral problems and to broaden and deepen this new momentum and this new spirit of cooperation and understanding, including in the economic and security spheres. I wish to inform the Council that the process of assigning Congolese officials to staff this structure is under way; it too will be finalized during the first quarter of 2009.

In addition to my Government's efforts to restore peace and peaceful coexistence with all our neighbours, let me reaffirm that within our country the Democratic Republic of the Congo is taking the same measures to make it possible to coexist peacefully with all elements of our national community. That is the context of the cooperation process now under way in Nairobi with United Nations facilitation.

This is taking place strictly within the framework of the AMANI programme agreed upon in Goma by all parties. For my Government the AMANI programme remains the sole framework for discussions. The programme, which resulted from the Goma act of engagement adopted at the Conference on Peace, Security and Development for the Provinces of North and South Kivu, calls for the disengagement of armed troops, offering each the option of either being integrated into the regular army of the Democratic Republic of the Congo or being demobilized and reintegrated into society. No other framework for discussion should be opened lest other armed troops claim the same right.

Finally, with respect to foreign combatants on Congolese soil, it must be noted that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the main victim of that presence. It is a victim of theft, rape and massacre. It is paying for a crime it did not commit, and it is paying because at the time the international community was unable to correctly handle the extremely grave situation in Rwanda. Along with that country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has developed an operational plan to resolve the problem, with the assistance of MONUC.

Elsewhere, in Orientale province, joint military operations by Uganda, the Sudan and my country are under way with a view to putting an end to the destructive activities of the Lord's Resistance Army.

We hope that the confluence of all these manifestations of regional cooperation will eliminate any pretext preventing us — as our head of State, His Excellency the President of the Republic, Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, said in his most recent state of the nation address — from

> "eliminating real or imagined disagreements that are poisoning our relations with some of our neighbours. In that way we will tangibly reduce the scope for violence and pillage in the region, which has long been facilitated by the lack of communications among our States".

Thanks to the geographic and economically strategic situation and to our natural resources — which should naturally provide us with an engine for development both regionally and subregionally in peace, security and freely accepted democracy — sustainable development in my country, integrated and unified regionally and subregionally, will absolutely provide major and ongoing opportunities for our neighbours in particular and Africa in general. That can never be replaced by individual and ephemeral

criminal proceeds from smuggling, nor by organized looting of State terrorism.

The wish of my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is that 2009 will be the year of the end of the suffering of its people, the year of the return to peace in the hearts and minds of all, not only for Congolese but also for all peoples in the countries of the Great Lakes region.

It is on this hopeful note that I would like to conclude by wishing members of the Council and their families my most sincere wishes for happiness and prosperity in the upcoming year. May 2009 bring to the world more understanding, more tolerance, more peace and more solidarity.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda): I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to participate in the deliberations on the situation in the Great Lakes region. Let me take this opportunity to recognize the presence of His Excellency Mr. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and of His Excellency Mr. Karel de Gucht, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

My delegation welcomes the fourth special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) (S/2008/728 and Add.1), and the opportunity to reflect on the allegations against Rwanda contained in the report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see S/2008/773). Both reports have contributed to the formulation of the new MONUC mandate.

While the Government of Rwanda welcomes the Secretary-General's reports on MONUC, it is our considered view that the new mandate for MONUC should focus on addressing the issue of negative forces in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially the ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR, which is the root cause of the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic.

The continued presence of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR undermines stability in the region and strains the relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. This group was the central cause of the first and second Congo wars and gave rise to the formation of various rival militia groups in the Democratic Republic. It is in that light that the current escalation of the conflict in North Kivu is largely attributed to them. This ongoing conflict has led to the killings of thousands of people, the displacement of hundreds of thousands more, the rape of women and the recruitment of child soldiers.

The Government of Rwanda would like to remind this Council that MONUC was established in response to the request by the signatories of the 1999 Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement that the United Nations deploy an appropriate peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of Congo to ensure implementation of the Agreement and to act, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, to track down all armed groups in the Democratic Republic. That is set out in article III, paragraph 11 (a), of the Agreement. Paragraph 8.2.2 of Annex A to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, concerning peace enforcement, states that the mandate of the United Nations force shall include peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations for "Tracking down and disarming Armed Groups" — including the ex-FAR/Interahamwe — "Screening mass killers, perpetrators of crimes against humanity and other war criminals" and "Handing over 'genocidaires' to the International Crimes Tribunal for Rwanda".

Resolution 1291 (2000), in paragraph 7 (c), commits MONUC to develop an action plan for the overall implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement, including the comprehensive disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration of all members of armed groups referred to in Annex A, Chapter 9.1 of the Ceasefire Agreement, which include the ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR. In its resolution 1355 (2001), paragraph 9, the Security Council emphasizes that the disarmament and demobilization of, and cessation of any support to, the ex-FAR/Interahamwe are essential to the settlement of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, none of the aforementioned recommendations were implemented, as the ex-FAR/Interahamwe remains the single greatest source of instability in the eastern Democratic Republic.

It is important to note that there have been several agreements and initiatives to resolve the issue of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe, including the Lusaka Agreement of 1999, the Pretoria Agreement of 2002, the Tripartite Plus mechanism of 2004, the Abuja Declaration of 2004, the International Conference on

Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, the resolution adopted by the African Union Peace and Security Council at its meeting held on 10 and 11 January 2005 in Libreville, Gabon, the Nairobi Joint Communiqué of 9 November 2007 and several United Nations resolutions.

In a presidential statement issued as document S/PRST/2007/28 of 23 July 2007, the Security Council asked MONUC to support the integrated brigades of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) with a view to disarming recalcitrant foreign and Congolese armed groups. Paragraph 3 of resolution 1804 (2008) recalls MONUC's mandate to facilitate the voluntary demobilization and repatriation of disarmed foreign combatants and their dependants, and to use all necessary means, within the limits of its capacity and in the areas where its units are deployed, to support operations led by the integrated brigades of the FARDC with a view to disarming the recalcitrant armed groups in order to ensure their participation in the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration process.

In its various meetings, the Tripartite Plus mechanism has been advocating for changing MONUC's mandate to address the problem of negative forces. Such meetings include the Tripartite Plus meeting of Chiefs of General Staff held in Bujumbura on 18 April 2007, the second Tripartite Plus Joint Commission Ministerial Meeting, held in Lubumbashi on 7 June 2007, the Ministerial Meeting held in Kampala on 17 September 2007, and the third Tripartite Plus Joint Commission of Chiefs of General Staff held in Lubumbashi on 1 and 2 October 2007, and so on.

In 2007, MONUC and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo designed an operational plan to disarm negative forces in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, but it failed to materialize. All these agreements have not been implemented, in part due to a lack of political will and military capability on the part of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in part, due to the divergent interests of the international community.

The presence of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR in the Democratic Republic of the Congo gave rise to the formation of various rebel movements in the eastern part of the country, notably the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP) of General Laurent Nkunda, which was formed in 2005. The emergence of Nkunda actually reflects the failure on the part of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to address the continued presence of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR, who are systematically exterminating Congolese Tutsis, as they did in Rwanda in 1994. The threat they pose to the Congolese minorities, and the failure of the FARDC to protect its citizens certainly justifies Nkunda's claim of being a protector of his Congolese Tutsi community to the extent that members of his community view him as their sole protector and hope for survival.

The problems caused by the presence of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the emergence of Nkunda are inextricably intertwined. The ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR has systematically been targeting Tutsis in the region. They have caused the displacement of civilians and committed all sorts of human rights violations, including rape, killings and looting. They killed Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese whom they identified as Tutsis at the Mudende refugee camp in Rwanda in December 1997. Together with the Burundian rebel group Palipehutu-Forces nationales de libération (Palipehutu-FNL), they killed 160 Banyamulenge refugees in August 2004 in Gatumba, Burundi, and eight foreign tourists in the Bwindi forest in Uganda, looted the villages of Bunagana in southwestern Uganda on 8 August 2007 and forced more than 45,000 Congolese whom they identified as Tutsis into exile in Rwanda. Many others have fled to Burundi, because their villages have been occupied by this genocidal force.

Despite the signing of the Nairobi joint communiqué between the Governments of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 9 November 2007 in Nairobi, the problem of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR persists. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the international community, through MONUC, made many commitments that they have failed to honour, including the establishment of strict border controls and the prevention of illicit cross-border movements of combatants. Consequently, the ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR has continued cross-border infiltrations into Rwanda from their bases in the North and South Kivu provinces.

MONUC was requested to support the military operations of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

against the ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR and bring to justice the genocidaires, but this has not been done, as the ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR units remain associated with FARDC brigades in military regions 8 and 10, deployed in areas close to the Rwandan border. The ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR has, over the span of 14 years, continued to enjoy sanctuary, military support and freedom of movement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Under the Nairobi joint communiqué, Rwanda agreed to increase border controls and take steps to ensure that rebels do not receive cross-border support. Rwanda also agreed to share a list of wanted genocidaires with both the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUC and to put a mechanism in place for the safe return and the effective socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants. Rwanda has honoured all her commitments, including the submission of the list of genocidaires and an increase in border controls.

It is in this context that about 68 CNDP recruits have so far been arrested and are currently being held in Rwanda. In addition, Rwandan authorities intercepted Colonel Mutebutsi and have kept him in confinement in Rwanda since November 2007 to prevent him from joining the CNDP.

Patient Mwendanga of the CNDP was declared persona non grata in Rwanda. He came to Rwanda on 6 September 2007 and was subsequently arrested and taken to court on 12 and 16 September 2007 respectively. He won the case and continues to travel to Belgium, where he is a citizen, and to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Rwandan authorities in October this year informed the Group of Experts on the arms embargo against the Democratic Republic of the Congo of the seizure of military uniforms imported from the United States of America and destined to the CNDP.

The Government of Rwanda takes this opportunity to once again reject the allegations by the Group of Experts that it has helped the CNDP. As detailed in Rwanda's response to the report of the Group of Experts of 15 December 2008, the Government of Rwanda strongly recommends that the United Nations withdraw the unfounded allegations against Rwanda and instead fully engage in supporting the implementation of ongoing bilateral, regional and international initiatives to resolve the conflict i region.

The Government of Rwanda intends to engage and participate in all initiatives in direction, including a joint Rwanda/Demo Republic of the Congo military operations pl disarm the genocidal forces in the ex- Interahamwe/FDLR in the Democratic Republic Congo; the resumption of diplomatic relations be the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rw and the revival of the Economic Community Great Lake Countries, which is comprised of Bu the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rw The international community should stop Rwanda as a diversion from its own failure to d and repatriate the FDLR in accordance outstanding agreements and instead support ongoing efforts to resolve this problem.

Above all, the Government of Rwanda woul to take this opportunity to request the Security C to give MONUC a robust mandate to effectively d the ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR, since that gen force remains the epicentre of the security proble the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the r in general. Otherwise, the group's prolonged pre in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will co to be a source of conflict in the region, and MO will not be able to deliver on its prime purpose, d the enormous resources at its disposal.

The Government of the Republic of Rw believes that the mandate of the United N Mission in the Democratic Republic of the C (MONUC) should, in accordance with the provisi the various agreements and initiatives, be amend address the issue of negative forces. Rwanda be that with an appropriate mandate and a complete in political will, the Forces Armées de la Répu Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and MONUC effectively carry out operations against the ex-F Armées Rwandaises (FAR)/Interahamwe/F Démocratiques de la Libération du Rwanda (FDL

Unwavering support for the full implemen of the latest bilateral engagements between Rw and the Democratic Republic of the Congo ar renewal of MONUC's mandate to dismantl ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR is the only solution current crisis in eastern Democratic Republic Congo. There is urgent need for an honest and cr

display of military force by the international community, through MONUC, to push the ex-FAR/Interahamwe/FDLR high command to disarm. The Government of the Republic of Rwanda remains committed to finding a lasting solution to the problems of the Great Lakes region and, in particular, the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President: The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I give him the floor.

Mr. Thambwe Mwamba (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I did not at all wish to get into a debate, but I think that the excesses found in the statement given by the Permanent Representative of Rwanda require me to attempt to re-establish some truth.

The first thing that must be pointed out is that, as anyone who knows African geography knows, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a mosaic of minorities. There is no one dominant tribe. I really do not like talking about individual tribes. The representative talked about the Tutsis and I think it is very sad to have to single out one particular tribe because we are a mosaic of tribes and the Tutsis are not the smallest of the minorities. For that, one can look in Katanga; it is the Banyanzi who are the smallest — they have only one village.

There was a real problem for the Tutsi minority, which had to do with their Congolese nationality: after independence, all of the constitutions that were written in our country stated that the descendants of ethnic groups and tribes established on Congolese territory at the time of the Berlin Conference were Congolese nationals.

Based on that principle, for a number of decades, we denied Congolese nationality to Tutsis who had immigrated afterwards. We then thought that it was necessary to go beyond that interpretation. Thus, in the last Constitution, which was adopted by referendum, as well as in the Transition Constitution drafted as a result of the Sun City Agreement, deleted that historical reference to tribes that had been established on Congolese territory at the time of the Berlin Conference in favour of the principle enshrined in today's Constitution, which is that all tribes on Congolese territory on 30 June 1960 have Congolese nationality.

Thus, the major challenge that the representative referred to was overturned by the will of the Congolese themselves. To say today that Mr. Nkunda is the leader of an ethnic group that feels threatened is excessive and deeply shocks us.

At the same time, what is happening today in the Kivus appears very clearly as a transposition onto Congolese territory of conflicts that had been raging in neighbouring countries, because the people being massacred by Mr. Nkunda in Kiwanja are curiously all part of the same ethnic group, the Congolese Hutus. This shows that the Rwandan conflict has been transferred onto our territory. Today, of the 1.5 million displaced Congolese persons in North Kivu, 90 per cent belong to the same ethnic group, the Congolese Hutus. This means that, if we continue to entertain that type of argument, we are, in fact, working against the Congolese Tutsis, because the Hutus that are currently in North Kivu and the Bantu, generally, what are in the two Kivus, amount to roughly 10 million people.

Now, if Mr. Nkunda now wants there to be a new North Kivu province that he might be able to lead, even in that province he would be in the minority. So, it is extremely dangerous to maintain such a position. In the end, Mr. Nkunda, through his actions, is making enemies out of 10 million people in North Kivu who already detest him, and he is endangering his own ethnic group, which he claims he is trying to protect.

The Tutsis are not the smallest minority in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — I told you about the Bayanzi. We did what we had to do to integrate them into our institutions. That is why you will find that in all of our country's institutions today, Mr. Nkunda's ethnic group, despite its number, has a presence — in the Senate, in the National Assembly, in the Government and even in the army, where there are nine generals of his ethnic group, 19 colonels and several hundred majors and senior officers. I do not think that he would find the same proportion in neighbouring countries.

We do not want to take a step backwards. We are steadfastly committed to move forward to normalized relations with Rwanda, but it is still important for everyone to be involved. In less than two months we have had six meetings, five on a bilateral basis with Rwanda, plus a sixth meeting with Burundi and Rwanda, and that was because we had moved forward in our programme to normalize the situation.

Therefore, we need to do away with this pretext that Mr. Nkunda has created for economic reasons, one that he is continuing to use along with other claims. It is completely false to say that the Tutsi ethnic group today is an ethnic group that is threatened. We removed the major problem in the Constitution; we have done everything we could to integrate them. In the last Government, the Governmental representative of the Tutsi ethnic group was the president of the Tutsi community of North Kivu.

I do not want to get back into that discussion, which is rather reductionist, but I did want to correct the record. If the same efforts were to be made by neighbouring countries to handle problems inside their countries, the entire region would be at peace. We do not want to move backwards, but it is clear that Mr. Nkunda is a creation from outside, not for reasons of security, we have always maintained, but for purely economic reasons.

The President: The representative of Rwanda has requested to take the floor to make a further statement. I give him the floor.

Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for his second statement.

As he has done, I would like to provide some clarification. I can agree with him on the geographic issues regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the fact that the two Kivu provinces share a border with Rwanda, and that the same peoples live in the Kivu provinces and in Rwanda. I could link that geographic aspect to historical aspects, because the genocide in Rwanda took place within the Tutsi ethnic population.

Those who committed genocide were transferre with their arms and munitions to the Democrat Republic of the Congo, and they have continued the genocidal project on the other side of the border. Wh I have said is what is recorded in history: the actors the genocide in Rwanda, the ex-FAR/Interhamw FDLR, were transferred and continued their genocid project, in terms of acts as well as ideology. Th ideology that they teach today is an ideology of hate, reduce and exterminate the Tutsi segment of th Congolese population. That is all I said; I did not sa anything else. And those are facts.

I would also like to recall the fact that, in view this historical situation, the United Nations establish MONUC to bring an end to this incredible situatio where an army that has committed genocide and known to have done so is circulating freely within territory. That is what I brought to the Council attention, and I will do so again. It deserves th ongoing attention both of the Democratic Republic the Congo and of the Security Council.

In conclusion, I would like simply to come bac to the statement made by the Minister for Foreig Affairs and to say that in the past months there h been a process shared by the two countries that seek through ongoing meetings, to examine these problem and find solutions. What I have said and what I hope that those meetings may continue and culminate declarations or agreements that can, like previous one be put into action. It is here that the problem lies: the implementation and application of the agreemen that have been signed.

The President: There are no more speakers on n list. The Security Council has thus concluded the prese stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. Th Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.